

**73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

**Agenda Item: 121  
Commemoration of the Abolition of Slavery and the Transatlantic  
Slave Trade:  
Report of the Secretary-General**

**INDIA STATEMENT  
by  
Ms. Paulomi Tripathi  
First Secretary**

21 November 2018

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary General for his report under the agenda item 121 on 'Commemoration of the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade'.

Mr. President,

The transatlantic slave trade lasting over 400-years, has undeniably been one of the most tragic and inhumane chapters in recorded human history.

It was the manifestation of greed and immoral pursuit for profit, coupled with unbridled abuse of power exercised by mighty over the weak, that forced millions from their homes to toil in faraway lands. It destroyed millions of lives over generations and changed the socio-economic fabric of societies in Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

Transatlantic slave trade was an instance of what an ungoverned and lawless globalization can lead to.

The uprooted African communities have contributed greatly to the local economies and influenced the arts and culture and life of societies where

they now live. However, many of these communities continue to face scars of deep rooted racial discrimination, oppression. Chronic poverty continue to persist as the economies that were deliberately designed to bring profit to the elite in faraway lands in a bygone era.

It is, therefore, important to understand what the transatlantic slave trade and slavery meant, so that we can draw lessons from our collective history.

Mr. President,

It is in this context we welcome and will continue to support, various activities and programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Information for education and awareness-generation about this dark phase in history and to commemorate the International day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade in March every year, that honours the memory of the millions who suffered through this brutal system.

India and the Department of Public Information co-organised an exhibition two years back on the history of enslaved East Africans who were taken to India. Many of these rose to positions of military and political authority in India. The exhibition brings out the far greater social mobility experienced by these individuals in India.

UNESCO has also played a key role in organising and linking programmes through the Slave Route Project to spread the understanding of the impact and consequences of the slave trade. With the abolition of slavery the colonial powers turned to using millions of Indian indentured labour, at virtually no cost, to work on plantations across the world to perpetuate their economic domination. The UNESCO project on International Indentured Labour Route is another significant effort to preserve the memory and lessons of this phase.

The International Decade for People of African Descent, which started in 2015, also provides an opportunity to showcase the most valuable contributions that once enslaved people and their descendants have made to the societies that forced them into bondage.

India is proud to have joined as one of the lead contributors to the Permanent Memorial Fund in supporting the efforts of the Caribbean community and the African nations and others that has led to the establishment of the permanent memorial 'Ark of Return' at the United Nations. We deeply appreciate the leadership of Ambassador Rattray of Jamaica on this endeavor.

Mr. President,

We firmly believe that we must continue to raise awareness about the transatlantic slave trade through education and outreach activities. We hope that wide participation in these events leads to changed attitudes with salutary consequences for our global society, to avoid the recurrence of the past injustices.

I thank you Mr. President.